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Letter dated 31 August 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

As you know, the Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 under the auspices of the United Nations, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, in order to promote the agenda of good governance of cultural diversity at both the global and local levels, and help counter divisions, polarization and extremism within and among societies.

I am pleased to note that, over the past year, the Alliance has continued to attract broad political support — the Group of Friends now numbers 122 members, primarily States but also international organizations — and that a range of countries have adopted national strategies to advance its goals. It further benefits from the creative involvement of a steadily growing number of partners, including different components of civil society, media, religious leaders, the business community and foundations. The Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Rio de Janeiro, confirmed the global scope of the Alliance as the leading United Nations forum dealing with intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

In an increasingly interconnected world, often divided by cross-cultural tensions, the Alliance can play a significant role, as a bridge-builder and as a catalyst for concrete and practical efforts aimed at furthering trust and cooperation among diverse cultures. I look forward to more countries joining the Group of Friends and actively supporting the Alliance, including financially.

I am pleased to present to you the third annual report, which the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, President Jorge Sampaio, submitted to me together with an addendum to the second implementation plan (2009-2011) (see annex). The report highlights the main activities carried out between June 2009 and July 2010 in accordance with the second implementation plan, which set out the agenda of the Alliance for the period covered and defined concrete initiatives to be carried out.

* A/65/150.

Please recycle

The High Representative notes that significant progress has been made since the Second Forum. The Alliance is now focusing its efforts on delivering on commitments made at the Third Forum and paving the way for the fourth Forum, which will be hosted by the Government of Qatar in 2011.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present report and its annex to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

Alliance of Civilizations: third annual report of the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations

Summary

The present report highlights the main activities carried out by the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations and its Secretariat between June 2009 and July 2010. These activities were developed in accordance with the second implementation plan (2009-2011), which was submitted to the Secretary-General in July 2009 and which aims to carry out the recommendations proposed in the initial report of the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations. The present report also contains an annex with an addendum to the second implementation plan, corresponding to a midterm review based on the outcomes and new initiatives announced at the Rio de Janeiro Forum.

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	4
II.	Overview of progress	5
III.	Consolidating the Alliance of Civilizations	6
IV.	Main initiatives and activities	9
V.	Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations	23
VI.	Outreach	24
VII.	Governance: secretariat and Trust Fund	26
VIII.	Conclusion	26
Annex		
	Alliance of Civilizations: addendum to the second implementation plan (2009-2011)	28

I. Introduction

1. The Alliance of Civilizations aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism within and among societies. Furthermore, it provides a platform for addressing intercultural diversity challenges and thus contributes to promoting good governance of cultural diversity. This initiative is firmly anchored in the common framework of principles and values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments.

2. The Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 as an initiative of the Secretary-General, under the co-sponsorship of the President of the Government of Spain and the Prime Minister of Turkey. It emerged from a conviction that, in order to achieve sustainable peace and development, long-standing divisions and misperceptions between cultures need to be addressed. This vision was articulated by a High-level Group of 20 eminent personalities appointed by the Secretary-General to explore the roots of polarization in the world. In their report, members of the Group identified the main fields of action of the Alliance — education, youth, media and migration — and outlined a range of practical initiatives that provide the foundation upon which the Alliance develops its work.

3. In April 2007, the Secretary-General appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance. The High Representative sets the Alliance's agenda and ensures its implementation. As a political results-oriented initiative, the Alliance promotes a dialogue that delivers change on the ground. To that end, a first implementation plan (2007-2009) was developed and a second plan (2009-2011) has been implemented with a view to prioritizing goals to be achieved and providing a framework for action to be carried out in cooperation with a wide array of partners and stakeholders. Both include a number of projects and initiatives meant to open up avenues of practical intercultural dialogue and cooperation aimed at building trust and mutual respect within and among increasingly diverse societies.

4. The Alliance of Civilizations draws its strength from the expanding community of its Group of Friends, comprising more than 120 Governments and international organizations. The Group provides the necessary political support for the High Representative, acts as the driving force of the Alliance and plays a vital role in its implementation process. Through a broad dialogue-based and consensus-building approach, the High Representative seeks the input, advice and support of its members on all key aspects of the Alliance's activities.

5. This is the third annual report submitted by the High Representative. It aims to highlight the main activities carried out from June 2009 to July 2010, in accordance with the second implementation plan (2009-2011). This plan builds on the lessons learned and past results achieved within the framework of the first implementation plan (2007-2009), as well as on the multifaceted conclusions and commitments of the Forums of Madrid (January 2008) and Istanbul (April 2009). Its first year of implementation led to the Rio de Janeiro Forum (27-30 May 2010), which underlined the Alliance's global dimension and reach. Based on the goals achieved so far, on the outcomes of the Rio de Janeiro Forum and on announcements made as well as on the challenges ahead and the obstacles identified, a midterm review of the

second implementation plan was also carried out and is summarized in the addendum contained in the annex to the present report.

II. Overview of progress

6. During the period under review, the Alliance managed to maintain its momentum, attract new members, build consensus among its constituency and deliver on some of its objectives. The main purpose of the activities carried out was to consolidate the results achieved so far and to advance the Alliance's goals in a world marked by a global economic crisis and persistent cultural, ethnic, religious and social tensions. Among the six priorities identified in the second implementation plan, very good progress was made in the following four areas:

- Consolidation of the global scope of the Alliance and its universal perspective with the accession of the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, the overwhelming majority of South American countries and a good number of African States.
- The enhanced role of the Alliance as one of the major United Nations platforms for intercultural dialogue and cooperation following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/14 on the Alliance of Civilizations and intensified activities of the High Representative in various international forums to promote the Alliance as a soft power tool for preventive diplomacy.
- New national plans for intercultural dialogue and cooperation were presented by member countries and the Alliance's Regional Strategy for South-East Europe was adopted at a ministerial conference in Sarajevo in December 2009 and its action plan presented in May 2010; furthermore, the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean was prepared and finalized at a high-level meeting in July 2010 in Alexandria, Egypt.
- Main projects launched in Madrid and Istanbul, including the Rapid Response Media Mechanism and the Global Expert Finder (media), Fellowship Programme (youth/education), Dialogue Café (youth/education/social innovation), Youth Strategy and the Online Community on Migration have developed and expanded significantly during the reporting period.

7. However, although very welcome, this political recognition and the fast-developing process have not yet generated the level of financial support that would allow the Alliance to deliver as much as it should. Progress in making the Alliance a sustainable initiative has become a matter of great urgency. Building a body of committed and regular supporters — comprising Governments, international organizations, foundations, the corporate sector and individuals — is now the key priority. Moreover because of the steady enlargement of the Alliance of Civilizations membership and the ever increasing number of tasks to be performed, reinforcement of the Alliance's organizational capabilities also has to be taken into consideration as a priority issue.

8. With respect to the Alliance's media outreach, the implementation of a more effective communications strategy is one of the six priorities that needs further advancement.

9. The third Forum of the Alliance that took place in Rio de Janeiro on 28 and 29 May 2010 was preceded by a whole-day forum, entirely organized by partners of the Alliance. The forum was a major achievement because it consolidated the overall priorities mentioned above and gave extra leverage to the Alliance as a United Nations initiative dealing with intercultural dialogue and cooperation at the global level. Rio de Janeiro clearly showed the global convening power of the Alliance.

10. On a different note, during the period covered by this report, the Alliance faced a number of new challenges of three different types and the problem of its sustainability remained an unsolved issue. Firstly, the increasing diversity of its members brought additional competing demands and expectations. Ensuring unity of purpose, coherence and consistency of action in spite of a variety of approaches is indeed a future challenge for the Alliance as a United Nations global initiative. Secondly, the increasing diversity of our societies is generating growing anxiety among populations at the global level, driving communities apart and putting democracies under added pressure. So the challenge for the Alliance is to be able to deliver as a new soft power tool at a time when cultural diversity is clearly an issue of security, stability and sustainable peace. Thirdly, the added value of the Alliance was sometimes challenged during this period, in particular its results-oriented approach twinned to its mission as a global matchmaker and catalyst for joint actions.

III. Consolidating the Alliance of Civilizations

11. The main priority of the High Representative for the period covered by this report was the consolidation of the Alliance as a global platform for intercultural dialogue and cooperation, further to its particular focus on relations between the so-called Western and Muslim societies.

12. In order to strengthen its political credibility and its ability to deliver without undermining the chances for further progress in achieving the Alliance's goals whenever possible, major efforts were undertaken towards enhancing the role of all members, partners and stakeholders, i.e. Governments, international and regional organizations, civil society and private sector.

Group of Friends community

13. Support for the Alliance of Civilizations continued to grow with an increase in membership, bringing the number of Group of Friends members to 122 (102 countries and 20 international organizations).[1] In this regard, we must stress the importance of the accession of the United States of America, the culmination of a long process of intense diplomatic contacts, the new membership of almost all South American countries, triggered by the announcement of the Rio de Janeiro Forum, as well as of a number of African countries, generated by the so-called

[1] The following countries and international organizations joined the Group of Friends in the past 12 months: Angola, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burkina Faso, Colombia, Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Organization of American States, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, São Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabic, Sudan, Suriname, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

South-South cooperation led by Brazil, and the accession of Saudi Arabia. Together, these new members helped globalize the Alliance so that it is now on the threshold of a new cycle of growth and development.

14. The Group of Friends met four times during this period, two at the permanent representative level (June 2009 and February 2010) and two at the ministerial level (September 2009 and in Rio de Janeiro, at the Forum in May 2010) in order to keep the Group informed of the major developments within the Alliance of Civilizations and generate debate and consultations among its members. Furthermore, the High Representative had regular contact with the members of the Group of Friends and held several bilateral meetings to secure support for the Alliance and its ongoing activities, in particular within the framework of the preparation for the regional strategies for South-East Europe and the Mediterranean.

15. Furthermore, during the period covered by this report, Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted the first Regional Ministerial Conference on South-East Europe, which took place in Sarajevo in December 2009. It brought together ministers and Government representatives of 14 countries as well as some international and regional organizations. On the eve of the Conference, ministers held a working dinner convened by the High Representative, at which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland was the special guest, to exchange views on the aftermath of the popular initiative on the ban of new minarets in Switzerland.

16. In Sarajevo, ministers approved the first regional strategy of the Alliance for the region. On that occasion, a meeting with civil society representatives was held to prepare the action plan implementing the strategy.

17. Regarding relations with international and regional organizations, this period was marked by intensive efforts to attract new members (such as the African Union) and develop closer ties with old members.[2] Leadership changes in some partner organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Organization for Migration, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization required further contact and meetings involving the High Representative to ensure support and enhance cooperation.

18. In order to develop closer cooperation, special attention was also given to relations with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The High Representative paid an official visit to the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, also visited the Islamic Development Bank, and addressed OSCE on two occasions: once in Vienna, at the level of its Permanent Council and the other in Astana, where he attended the High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination organized by the Kazakh Chair. New cooperation agreements were concluded with new members, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture. Some expired Memorandums of Understanding were renewed (such as with UNESCO) and an action plan implementing the existing Memorandum of Understanding with OIC was signed in Rio de Janeiro. Furthermore, there are ongoing internal consultations to prepare Memorandums of

[2] The African Union has since requested to join the Group of Friends.

Understanding with the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the World Bank.

Focal points

19. Following a call by the High Representative, members of the Group of Friends appointed focal points mandated to oversee implementation of the Alliance's goals at the national level, namely through the adoption and implementation of national plans, and to coordinate relations and activities with the AOC secretariat. As at 31 May 2009, 70 countries and 17 international organizations had appointed their focal points.

20. The Alliance of Civilizations ensured coordination of their efforts and exchanges by organizing focal points meetings hosted by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Rabat (November 2009) and in Rio de Janeiro (May 2010), issuing a periodical newsletter for the focal points, and by holding regular meetings and consultations.

Thematic platforms

21. Based on a proposal made by Switzerland, work has now started under the format of thematic platforms, bringing together small, balanced groups of countries interested in further exploring specific themes of common interest and putting forward proposals for concerted or joint action. Two thematic platforms were created in the context of the Rio de Janeiro Forum. One focuses on media literacy education; the other aims to bridge gaps in mobilizing humanitarian and development assistance.

Global networks and partnerships

22. During this period, the Alliance made intense efforts aimed at consolidating the involvement of civil society actors in its work as indispensable partners in delivering results, in catalysing action within countries and in mobilizing broad-based movements to drive the Alliance's agenda forward.

23. In this regard, efforts were scaled up in order to build and/or consolidate various networks targeting specific groups — youth, universities, think tanks and foundations, interfaith networks — and to stimulate public-private partnerships involving the private sector.

Public-private partnerships

24. A promising evolution has been the development of numerous public-private partnership projects. The Rio de Janeiro Forum saw the launch of the two first stations of Dialogue Café (in Lisbon and in Rio de Janeiro), an innovative project aimed at connecting people and communities through cutting edge technology, in partnership with Cisco, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Anna Lindh Foundation. Vivendi and the British Council joined the Alliance in Rio de Janeiro in launching work on "Measuring the impact of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity on peace and development", in a clear illustration of a new way of working that builds on the respective knowledge, experience and vision of actors in the public and private sectors; in addition, Deloitte, Touche and Tohmatsu, Vivendi and Euronews offered their support to the Marketplace of Ideas project.

25. Such initiatives open a new era for collaboration, particularly with regard to the development of the business coalition for intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity launched in New York in October 2009 in the presence of the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Antonio Brufau, Chief Executive Officer of Repsol, under the auspices of the Alliance and the Global Compact. The business coalition aims to inspire businesses to scale up their efforts and provide the foundation for promoting dialogue, identifying and disseminating best and innovative practices, and advocating the value of intercultural understanding. Preliminary talks are also under way with leading companies in the field of technology and new media operating worldwide to explore how they could contribute to promoting cultural understanding and cooperation.

Global interfaith networks

26. During the period under review, the Alliance of Civilizations continued to collaborate closely with other countries, agencies and non-governmental organizations working on issues of interfaith dialogue and faith-based cooperation with a view to building on complementarities. This work includes engaging with the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, Saudi Arabia's initiative on interfaith dialogue, and the proposal put forward by Prince Ghazi of Jordan for a "world interfaith harmony week" based on the "Common word between us and you" initiative. In addition, the AOC also participates in processes aimed at engaging with faith-based organizations, including the Policy Round Table with Faith-Based Organizations convened by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue activities and the Parliament of the World's Religions, which convened in Melbourne, Australia. The Alliance of Civilizations also continued to collaborate closely with Religions for Peace, which helped to organize a working session on the role of religious leaders in promoting peace and sustainable development at the Rio de Janeiro Forum.

The Alliance of Civilizations as a soft power tool for cultural and preventive diplomacy

27. During this period, the High Representative intensified his action aimed at developing the Alliance of Civilizations as a soft power tool for cultural and preventive diplomacy. He furthered contacts and dialogue with political, religious, media and civil society representatives who can use their influence to achieve progress on common objectives.

28. Initiatives such as the "White paper and the white process: from competing narratives to cooperative action", aimed at implementing the relevant recommendations of the report of the High-level Group, particularly its annex III, received his special attention.

IV. Main initiatives and activities

29. Two distinct but complementary sets of initiatives were further developed in the period covered by this report to support the broad objectives of the Alliance of Civilizations.

A. National plans and regional strategies

30. Encouraged by the High Representative, member States of the Group of Friends continued to work towards the adoption of national plans for intercultural dialogue as a means of taking ownership of the Alliance's objectives and translating them into local goals.

31. These plans cannot be devised according to a single model. Yet they are expected to be more than just a list of existing programmes. They should notably focus on removing barriers to equality and fighting prejudice ("breaking down walls"), helping develop intercultural skills ("building bridges") and creating spaces where ideas and beliefs can be respectfully exchanged ("sharing spaces"). Twenty-three States are currently implementing their national plans: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Kuwait, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. More plans are in preparation, in what should be seen as a long-term, gradual exercise to be carried out by countries at their own pace, using their own implementation channels.

32. In late 2009, the Alliance secretariat reviewed the existing plans, focusing both on the content and on the approach, and drafted a summary report with recommendations, which include the following:

- National plans should be strategic plans for improvement and increased engagement based on an analysis of the present state of governance of cultural diversity.
- National plans should highlight the coherence between actions at the levels of national Governments (including inter-ministerial coordination), local governments and civil society, with the involvement of all in a participative approach.
- International organizations can provide efficient targeted support if the national plans identify sectors in which there is scope for improvement, consultation and support.
- The Alliance of Civilizations secretariat offered to provide technical support to focal points in the development of national strategies, but this has been hampered by the limited human resources of the secretariat.

33. During the period under review, some member organizations of the Group of Friends — such as the League of Arab States, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and OIC — adopted statements and took initiatives in order to encourage countries to develop their own national plans and advance the Alliance's goals at the national level.

Regional strategies

34. In the same spirit, during this period, the Alliance invited two groups among the Group of Friends community that are facing common challenges to develop common actions in cooperation with civil society. Within a few months, an Alliance of Civilizations Regional Strategy for South-East Europe was put together and approved by a ministerial conference convened in Sarajevo in December 2009 by

the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was decided that a strong focus would be given to actions in the areas of youth and education. Partners were invited to submit projects that would be implemented in several countries. More than 40 proposals were received and assembled in a plan of action, to be implemented starting in the third quarter of 2010, subject to collecting the necessary funds.

35. Work also started on a Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean among more than 50 countries and international organizations. This project was initially suggested by the President of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. Three preparatory meetings took place, two in Egypt and one in Portugal, amid some debate on the optimal interplay between the conceptual-political framework and the identification of practical projects. The draft strategy was finalized in July 2010 in Alexandria at a meeting of senior officials/focal points and is expected to be approved together with its action plan at a ministerial meeting to be convened by the Government of Malta on 8 and 9 November 2010.

36. As work on these two strategies went on, ideas to develop similar initiatives in other regions began to be aired. Work on Latin America will start in November 2010 with a meeting to be hosted by the Government of Peru. The proposal to develop a regional strategy for Central Asia was discussed by the High Representative with the Kazakh Chair of OSCE.

B. Multi-stakeholder initiatives including Alliance-led projects and programmes

37. In a growing number of cases, national plans provide a framework for the implementation of activities. Governments also increasingly engaged in regional efforts on an ad hoc basis or in the context of Alliance of Civilizations regional strategies for intercultural dialogue and cooperation. Intergovernmental organizations developed common initiatives with the Alliance and shared their know-how and expertise. At the instigation of the High Representative, additional efforts were made to mainstream the Alliance's goals in the agenda of partners and to ensure that all relevant actors could coordinate significantly in their efforts to foster intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity at all levels.

38. The High Representative called on each of the countries and international organizations to support at least one specific Alliance initiative. As a result, support in these areas did grow but added efforts and support are still needed in order to ensure the sustainability of the Alliance and its capacity to deliver.

39. The initiatives listed below give a good overall picture of the ongoing projects and of initiatives that took place during the period covered by this report.

Education field of action

Education about Religions and Beliefs Online Learning Community

40. The Education about Religions and Beliefs Online Learning Community is meant as a resource for policymakers, educators and the general public on the issues concerning learning about diverse religions and beliefs. The resource was officially launched at the Istanbul Forum and the website (www.aocerb.org) went live in June 2009. Its first presentation was made on the occasion of the seventeenth Conference

of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Kuala Lumpur. On a weekly basis, hundreds of viewers make use of the various materials collected on the database.

41. Following the Istanbul Forum, a technical agreement on collaboration between the Council of Europe Directorate General of Education and the Online Learning Community was concluded. Under this agreement, the Council of Europe will contribute material relevant to intercultural education to the Alliance of Civilizations education about religions and beliefs website in January each year (starting in 2010).

42. In the context of the Alliance's outreach to Asia and Europe, one of the most useful partners has been the Asia-Europe Foundation. At the invitation of the Foundation, education about religions and beliefs was one of the projects that was presented at their "Talks on the hill" meetings in April 2009 in Davao City, Philippines, as well as part of an Asia-Europe dialogue on common values education held in Barcelona, Spain, in November 2009. These projects have resulted in policy recommendations that have included the need to have education on diverse religions and beliefs.

43. The Alliance of Civilizations is a member of the United Nations informal inter-agency task force on engagement with faith-based organizations/faith-based issues. At the invitation of UNFPA, in its capacity as chair of the task force, the Alliance representative participated in a Policy Round Table with Faith-Based Organizations organized by UNFPA in New York in August 2009 and cited education about religions and beliefs as an example of its interaction with faith-based issues and organizations. The round table emphasized the importance of partnerships to reduce maternal deaths and end violence against women, and provided evidence of the importance of religious groups in development issues.

44. As part of a joint event at the Parliament of the World's Religions with UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNESCO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World Bank, the Alliance presented several examples of its engagement with faith-based groups and issues, including the education about religions and beliefs clearing house.

45. The education about religions and beliefs clearing house was the subject of a plenary address at the Fourth Meeting of the Latin American Interfaith Network for Peace Education, held with the cooperation of UNESCO, the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, World Vision and the Judeo-Christian Fellowship of Uruguay.

46. The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has agreed to explore the possibility of translating into Arabic the *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs* — produced by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights — for the education about religions and beliefs clearing house. This translation will enable the Arabic version of the *Toledo Guiding Principles* to be uploaded on the education about religions and beliefs website.

Alliance of Civilizations research network

47. The Alliance of Civilizations research network is a network of doctoral-level universities and research centres that serve as an intellectual think tank on the Alliance's major themes of migration, media, education and youth. It currently

comprises 14 research institutions from different regions of the world. Outreach efforts were undertaken between the second half of 2009 and early 2010 to institutions in South-East Asia, the Middle East and South America. Most recently, formal memorandums of understanding were signed with institutions in Turkey and Israel.

48. As an outcome of the Istanbul Forum, the research network now has a page on the main Alliance of Civilizations website (www.unaoc.org) that features partner news and opportunities in the area of research grants (especially from the European Commission), fellowships and calls for publications. The Alliance is currently mapping areas of potential strengths of different members to create collaborative joint research working groups. These joint research working groups will then be in a position to apply for appropriate funding for research and scholarly collaboration from intergovernmental organizations.

49. Over 161 items of interest have been posted since the launch of this site and the network now consists of 16 academic institutions/research centres and networks (comprising over 200 institutions) representing different regions of the world.

Collaboration on expanding educational exchange opportunities

50. The Alliance is periodically circulating calls for academic exchanges (particularly those from the European Commission's Marie Curie Programme and fellowships that enable academics and students (particularly advanced students) to engage in the cross-cultural study of issues relevant to the Alliance. Such calls are posted on the research network web page, the education about religions and beliefs and the media literary education websites for the attention of academics and professionals.

51. Collaborations continue as a follow-up to the Istanbul Forum breakfast session on "History as a dimension of intercultural dialogue", with the Council of Europe. Relevant items and contacts were sent to the group of historians constituted during the Istanbul Forum.

International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures

52. The Alliance of Civilizations has submitted a range of items to UNESCO regarding the International Year of Rapprochement of Cultures; discussion of the potential items for action in 2010 continues. The Alliance has also supported the Mumbai Festival Forum on Building a Culture of Peace, at the request of the UNESCO Delhi Office.

General collaboration in the field of education

53. At the request of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Department of Public Information, the Alliance of Civilizations contributed to the conference "Faith series: building bridges between cultures: a closer look at Hinduism", showing the capacity of the Alliance to carry out outreach to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. At the request of the International Organization for Migration, the Alliance chaired a panel on "Partnerships at all levels" at a conference on irregular migration organized by the Center for Migration Studies and the International Organization for Migration on 22 January 2010, emphasizing the importance of partnerships in the general strategy

of the Alliance of Civilizations, with particular reference to partnerships that the Alliance has established with the International Organization for Migration in several areas.

54. General collaboration with the Asia-Europe Foundation included discussions — and in some cases specific contributions — on concept papers and speakers for Asia-Europe Foundation and Alliance of Civilizations meetings.

55. In the framework of general collaboration with the Euro-Mediterranean University, several meetings took place to agree on a range of common activities to be implemented in 2010-2011 such as summer schools, PhD seminars, "research souks", colloquiums and various professional development courses. A common action plan will be signed at the Alliance of Civilizations first Regional Conference for the Mediterranean.

Youth field of action

Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations

56. The Global Youth Movement is based on the Youth Strategy adopted in Istanbul during the Youth Event, on 6 and 7 April 2009 and developed in consultation with youth organizations and partners such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

57. Since then, the Alliance of Civilizations has implemented the Youth Strategy in collaboration with these partners in order to achieve its objectives of awareness-raising, capacity-building and information-sharing regarding the role of youth in fostering cross-cultural understanding and building inclusive societies. Moreover, preparations have begun for the first global convention of this Youth Movement, to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in October 2010 with the support of the Government of Azerbaijan.

58. Another key element of the Youth Strategy is the creation of the Youth Advisory Committee, which is composed of youth representatives from all regions of the world working together to support the Alliance in the youth sector. The Youth Advisory Committee also worked on refining the terms of reference for the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations, which is now entering its active phase by means of intense outreach to thousands of youth organizations and their supporters, including UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the League of Arab States.

Youth Solidarity Fund

59. The second edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund was launched and carried out very successfully. The Youth Solidarity Fund is an international small grants programme that provides seed funding of up to $30,000 to youth organizations advancing intercultural and interfaith dialogue at the local, national, regional or international levels. Projects funded under this programme are developed and implemented in their entirety by youth organizations, primarily for the benefit of youth. Projects last an average of six months and present a strong potential for growth and sustainability. The impact of these projects is both at the individual level

(youth) and the institutional level (youth organizations). During last year's pilot phase of the Fund, 110 proposals were submitted from 55 countries on all continents. A total of six projects were funded with a $100,000 funding envelope. During this year's edition of the Fund, 530 proposals were submitted from as many distinct youth organizations representing 99 countries on all continents. A total of 18 projects were funded with a $460,000 funding envelope. It is estimated that 33,000 individuals, mostly youth, benefited from these 18 projects.

60. Moreover, the Alliance of Civilizations worked with the Council of Europe to offer specialized training to the Youth Solidarity Fund winners in December 2009. This week-long training course focused on intercultural dialogue, human rights and project management. Given the immediate impact of this training on the participating youth organizations, the Alliance of Civilizations and the Council of Europe recommended that this good practice be replicated for future recipients of the Youth Solidarity Fund or similar initiatives.

Youth website

61. The Alliance of Civilizations sees as crucial the contribution of youth to improving understanding and cooperation between States and peoples of different cultures. In addition, more and more people, especially young people, are seeing the Internet as a primary means of obtaining and sharing knowledge. The Alliance of Civilizations, therefore, saw an implicit value in creating a website solely devoted to youth, where users could gain and exchange information about other youth organizations, opportunities available to youth wanting to get engaged in Alliance-related matters and tools to enhance their capacity to do so. In addition to these three searchable databases, the website includes a discussion forum where young people from every corner of the world can engage with each other on a series of issues linked to cultural and religious diversity. Information about the Alliance of Civilizations youth programme is also included along with a news section and "words of wisdom" from individual youth. In short, this youth website is an interactive one-stop shop for everything related to youth and cross-cultural understanding. Thousands of youth organizations, foundations, national Governments, as well as multilateral organizations with youth-serving programmes such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the European Commission, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the League of Arab States were asked to contribute content to this youth website.

International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding

62. The International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding announced at the end of 2009 provides a unique opportunity to mainstream the objectives of the Alliance and its youth programme within the United Nations system and a vast network of partners. The development of a framework for the celebration of this International Year was carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations Programme on Youth and UNESCO. The Alliance's Youth Advisory Committee and key youth partners contributed to the conceptualization of this framework as well as to resources available to local partners wishing to celebrate the International Year in their communities once it is launched in August 2010.

Media field of action

Rapid Response Media Mechanism

63. After a successful pilot phase, the Rapid Response Media Mechanism project continued to expand significantly and core activities focused on the following three key areas:

Journalist training

64. The Alliance conducted a series of training workshops for journalists in Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia and the Arab world. Carried out in collaboration with the International Center for Journalists and Search for Common Ground, the training courses were aimed at building journalistic skills, reflecting on the role of the media in covering and mitigating conflict, exploring tools for reporting on political and social issues in the digital age and reporting on "Muslim-West" relations. Practical outcomes of the training included articles, television and radio interviews, as well as blogs and websites developed by participants. In addition, a Cross-Cultural Reporting Award was launched, highlighting collaborations and joint reporting among journalists from Europe, North America and Muslim-majority countries.

Building networks of opinion leaders

65. The work of the Alliance of Civilizations involved providing messaging training to opinion leaders with the aim of giving greater visibility to voices that come from what are often stereotyped communities. In the United Kingdom, the Alliance has been working to develop a series of media training workshops for British Muslim opinion leaders in order to strengthen understanding of community relations among the broader public as well as the British Muslim community. To that end, two workshops were held for a total of 75 participants. One of the key outcomes of these training courses was the creation of a network of British Muslim opinion leaders committed to engage the media on issues that concern them through multiple channels: publishing op-ed articles, giving interviews, writing blogs.

Global Expert Finder

66. The Global Expert Finder resource continued to expand significantly and a new website was launched in May 2010 (www.globalexperfinder.org). The resource now numbers over 350 experts. A Selection Committee has been established for the evaluation of new experts and a list of over 200 prospective experts has been identified and thoroughly researched. Each expert generates an average of 10 media impressions every month. About 10 media alerts were sent every month, calling the attention of the media community to a range of experts prepared to share their views and analyses of current affairs and potentially divisive cross-cultural issues. Media alerts generated interest in a range of media outlets, including *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, Reuters, Xinhua, Al-Jazeera and CNN. The number of op-ed articles published by Global Expert Finder experts has also increased, particularly around the time of the Gaza crisis, on the occasion of the Swiss vote on minarets and around the time of the crisis in Kyrgyzstan. The Global Expert Finder website has been fully restructured and features media alerts, content produced by experts, as well as podcasts and video interviews. Moreover, a comprehensive marketing strategy has been designed and rolled out to increase media pickup of the Global Expert Finder resource.

Media literacy

67. The Alliance of Civilizations has continued to develop its media literacy initiatives in order to help young people navigate an increasingly complex media world and provide them with the tools they need to become discerning and critical media consumers. Four new partners joined the media literacy education clearing house network (http://aocmedialiteracy.org), including South Africa's University of Cape Town and Serbia's Media Education Center. Currently, there are 33 partners and over 1,000 registered users, both groups periodically participating by updating the database with new content. With the support of partners, the Alliance of Civilizations/UNESCO/European Commission publication *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World* has been widely distributed at many conferences around the world. The Alliance has been an active contributor to the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teacher Training. It is expected that the Alliance will support its implementation in Group of Friends member States interested — as part of the developing Alliance of Civilizations media literacy platform — in media literacy programmes. The UNESCO/University Twinning and networking scheme/Alliance of Civilizations Chair on Media and Information Literacy for Intercultural Dialogue, a network of six universities in Brazil, China, Egypt, Jamaica, Spain and the United States of America, has been consolidated and it is expected to initiate its programme by late 2010.

Then and Now: Beyond Borders and Differences

68. The Alliance of Civilizations is collaborating with the organization ART for the World in developing and producing the collective feature film *Then and Now: Beyond Borders and Differences*. The film also has the support of the Council of Europe and the Social Service of Commerce, Sao Paulo. It focuses on the overall spirit of compassion, mutual understanding and solidarity that lies at the core of all major religions. The film will include short segments directed by renowned international filmmakers, including Fanny Ardant (France), Hussein Karabey (Turkey), Tata Amaral (Brazil), Zhang Ke Jia (China) and Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania). The first results of this film were presented during the Third Forum in Rio de Janeiro.

General collaboration in the media field

69. As part of the overall media work carried out by the European Union, a dialogue was established between the Alliance of Civilizations and the European Union regarding the European Union's media communication in the field of prevention and radicalization. Through European Union representation on the Rapid Response Media Mechanism Steering Group, the Alliance benefited from input and insights drawing on the European Union's experience in developing media-based strategies aimed at tackling radicalization. Moreover, the Alliance developed a fruitful dialogue with the European Network of Experts on Radicalisation, taking part in the March 2010 seminar on "Preventing radicalization: communications, media and engagement with civil society" in Brussels and sharing ideas and insights on its own experience in organizing diversity training courses for journalists in Pakistan, Indonesia, the United States of America, Europe and the Arab world.

Migration/integration field of action

Online Community on Migration and Integration

70. The main achievement of the past year has been the design and launch of the website "Migration and integration: building inclusive societies" (www.unaoc.org/communities/migrationintegration) in May 2010. Built in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, the Online Community is a source of information on good practices of integration of migrant populations, a virtual space for exchange and learning for practitioners and a support mechanism for coordination and cooperation among stakeholders. The resource highlights successful models of integration for countering stereotypes and promotes further involvement of all stakeholders in integration.

71. The process of building up partnerships for the Migration Integration Programme is continuing: important organizations have commended the programme and provided very positive initial feedback on the website. Synergies and opportunities to co-implement events have been explored with numerous stakeholders and will certainly lead to a series of workshops in late 2010. During the third quarter of 2009, the Alliance of Civilizations undertook outreach activities to intensify relations with Group of Friends countries and organizations interested in and already working in the area of migration.

PLURAL+ youth video festival

72. The Alliance of Civilizations, in partnership with IOM, has developed PLURAL+, a youth video festival on migration, identity, diversity, inclusiveness and social cohesion. PLURAL+ was launched at the Second Forum and was developed with the support of various international partners, including the Anna Lindh Foundation, Chinh India, the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, the Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators, BaKaFORUM, the Royal Film Commission of Jordan and United Nations Television and Video. An award ceremony was held on 18 December 2009 at the Paley Center for Media in New York, where the winning videos were announced and screened.

73. In 2010, PLURAL+ is being distributed on DVD, broadcast on television stations and screened at video festivals and conferences around the world. The distributors include: Futura TV (Brazil), Al Jadeed TV (Lebanon), United Nations Television and Video, Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators, Chinh India Youth Festival, Habana Film Festival, Roots & Routes International Film Festival and BaKaFORUM 2010. The International Organization for Migration and partner organizations have expressed an interest in assisting the Alliance of Civilizations in launching the PLURAL+ 2010 edition.

Migration-integration series of events

74. The Alliance of Civilizations and the International Organization for Migration together with the Permanent Missions of Canada and Italy to the United Nations organized a high-level round table on the "Inter-ethnic city: management and policies for a better integration of migrants" in September 2009 in New York. The event focused on the challenges faced by municipalities in integrating migrants into their societies. Participants discussed challenges of rapid urbanization and the increasing importance of migration in the urban context. They examined good

practices and processes for better integration as experienced by local administrators, policymakers and other stakeholders. Speakers highlighted the need for policies and common action aimed at the successful integration of migrant populations and the crucial role played by municipal and local governments and the coordination among them.

75. One of the working sessions of the Third Forum in Rio de Janeiro, entitled "Migrants as agents for change and development", was organized by the Alliance and the International Organization for Migration. The session explored how migration impacts on social change and development and how efforts for social cohesion can feed into the prevention of international conflicts. It also aimed to explore ways in which migrants can retain ties to their country of origin and integration policies that can help foster migrants' contribution to development and change.

Other cross-cutting initiatives

Marketplace of Ideas

76. The Marketplace of Ideas showcases the most innovative and successful grass-roots initiatives aimed at promoting mutual understanding among peoples and cultures around the world. By connecting these initiatives to policymakers, potential donors and the media, the Alliance of Civilizations helps them to scale up and replicate, therefore helping to significantly increase their impact.

77. Ten organizations among hundreds of applicants were recognized as Marketplace of Ideas winners during the Rio de Janeiro Forum and their leaders were invited to present their projects (World Faith; Euro-Mediterranean Academy for Young Journalists; Forgotten Diaries; Melantjong Petjinan Soerabaia; Akili Dada; Universal Forum of Religions; Peaceworks; RandomKid; United Religions Initiative; Undergraduate ParliaMentors; Three Faiths Forum; Bridge the Gap TV). Partners from the private sector such as Vivendi, Deloitte Touche and Tohmatsu, the Global Dialogue Foundation, the British Council and Euronews have supported this initiative.

78. The next step under consideration is the creation of the World Intercultural Fund for Innovation to support these initiatives throughout the year and connect them with opportunities for networking, fund-raising, and scaling-up and replication.

Fellowship Programme

79. In September 2009, the Alliance launched its Fellowship Programme, which aims to facilitate exposure for emerging leaders from North America, Europe, and Muslim-majority countries to media, culture, politics, institutions, civil society and religion in one another's countries and to generate knowledge exchange, understanding and productive partnerships across borders. In the long run, through this programme the Alliance will create an informal network of emerging and influential leaders who will bring fresh perspectives to relations between the different countries and regions and who will advocate new approaches.

80. The design and philosophy of the programme are based on the successful model of the Marshall Memorial Fellowship created by the German Marshall Fund in the United States. The latter became the implementing agency of the Fellowship

Programme, responsible for its overall coordination and for organizing fellows' visits. The following organizations became lead partners of the programme: the British Council, the League of Arab States, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

81. The pilot phase of the programme was completed in March and April 2010 with 12 emerging leaders from the United States of America and Europe travelling to Egypt, Morocco and Qatar, and 12 emerging leaders from 7 countries in the Arab world travelling to Belgium, France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (North Carolina, Washington, D.C. and New York). The second phase will take place in the third quarter of 2010, engaging a wider range of partners.

Dialogue Café

82. After the public launch of the "Global network of Dialogue Cafés" project at the Istanbul Forum, the establishment of a non-governmental organization, a governance model for the project and a global strategy for the project were developed.

83. From June 2009 to April 2010, after the initial research was completed, a team of designers from Tangerine developed the design of the Dialogue Café pod and the Dialogue Café Association began implementing the strategy for the project, namely by developing a global communication exchange and identifying cities and local partnerships for the first pilot units of Dialogue Cafés.

84. The first two cafés opened on 27 May in Rio de Janeiro at Candido Mendes University and in Lisbon at the Design and Fashion Museum on the occasion of the third Forum, thanks to a partnership with Lisbon Municipality, Candido Mendes University and the use of the European network GÉANT.

85. The ongoing work aims to implement a further expansion of the project in the European-Mediterranean region to cities such as Florence (third Dialogue Café), Amsterdam, Ramallah and Tel Aviv. Possible Dialogue Cafés in Doha, Cairo, London and Oslo are also being considered. A full coverage of the region is sought as part of the future action plan implementing the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean.

First Alliance of Civilizations Summer School: "Bridging hearts, opening minds and doing things together" (Aveiro, Portugal, 15-21 August 2010)

86. During this period, a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at organizing the first Alliance of Civilizations summer school was planned. The host university (University of Aveiro, Portugal) had been announced at the Rio de Janeiro Forum. A number of interested partners were identified, including ALECSO, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the representation of the European Union Commission in Portugal to UNESCO, the Euro-Mediterranean University and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, as well as foundations (such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Foundation for the Electricity of Portugal — EDP Foundation), universities and think tanks, faith-led organizations (Aga Khan Development Network) and corporations (such as El Corte Inglés, André Jordan Group).

87. The aim of this summer school is to bring together young people (up to the age of 30) from various regions and different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds,

academic and professional profiles, walks of life and interests. Its purpose is threefold: to share worldviews, knowledge and experiences; to create a network of "Alliance of Civilizations young voices"; to agree on a number of projects to be developed through the network of the "Dialogue Café".

88. The summer school will combine a wide array of activities, ranging from courses on various subjects related to history, politics, law, international affairs, science, media literacy and religion; programmes on the Alliance of Civilizations initiative and projects, and on other initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation; project management workshops; seminars on capacity-building; to a number of cultural, gastronomic and athletic activities.

89. At the time of writing, following a call for applications posted on the Alliance of Civilizations website, almost a hundred candidates from more than 30 countries from all continents were selected to participate in the summer school. If successful, this event might be transformed in the future to an annual initiative.

City-to-city cooperation

90. During this period, the Alliance of Civilizations promoted and/or participated in a number of events involving local governments, municipalities and mayors in order to map out the future agenda for the local dimension in the work of the Alliance of Civilizations.

91. In this context, the above-mentioned high-level round table on the "Inter-ethnic city: management and policies for a better integration of migrants", was held in September 2009 in New York.

92. The Alliance of Civilizations also attended the first meeting of the coastal cities of the Mediterranean, organized by the Government of Italy in Reggio Calabria in October 2009. At that meeting, a declaration was adopted by mayors aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation among Mediterranean cities. It was agreed that a second meeting would be held in Lisbon with a view to establishing regular exchanges between Mediterranean cities but it has still to be scheduled.

93. During the Spanish Presidency of the European Union, the Alliance of Civilizations organized a round table on "The Alliance of Civilizations and city diplomacy initiatives" at the European Summit of Local Governments held in Barcelona, Spain, from 22 to 24 February 2010. The Alliance presented two initiatives to the audience: the Online Community on Migration and Integration (with the International Organization for Migration) and the Dialogue Café project. Moreover, it invited the expert Phil Wood to address the audience on "The intercultural cities: planning for diversity advantage" as a preparation for the Rio de Janeiro Forum session on "Living together in urban societies".

High-level meeting on "Religious freedom in democratic societies" (co-organized with the Spanish Presidency of the European Union (Cordoba, 3-4 May 2010)

94. A high-level meeting entitled "Religious freedom in democratic societies" was organized during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union under the auspices of the Alliance of Civilizations. The aim of the meeting was to help develop article 17.3 of the Treaty of Lisbon, which states that "the Union will maintain open, transparent and regular dialogue" with churches and religious organizations.

95. The Cordoba meeting involved two plenary sessions, with media coverage, as well as four meetings of panels of experts, which had restricted access. The issues discussed by the panels were "Religious pluralism in democratic societies", "The role of religious leaders in promoting a culture of peace", "Preventing religious radicalisation and extremism" and "Cooperation for the promotion of religious freedom".

96. The conclusions of the four panels at the Cordoba meeting were presented during the plenary session on 4 May 2010, and will subsequently be submitted to the High Representative.

Lisbon Forum of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (2009)

97. The 2009 edition of the Lisbon Forum, held by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe since 1994, took place in November in partnership with the Alliance of Civilizations. It focused on "Creating a culture of human rights through education", while the overall aim of the Lisbon Forum 2009 was to promote the creation of a culture of human rights through "quadrilogue" action, i.e. through Governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, and civil society.

98. The objectives of the Forum were as follows: to promote dialogue and sharing of experiences, expertise and good practices between Europe and the other continents; to explore different understandings and experiences of human rights education; to identify challenges that human rights education faces and elaborate on joint actions to meet these challenges; to reinforce cooperation between international organizations on the issue of human rights education; to contribute to the ongoing consultation process that will lead to the adoption of a recommendation by the Committee of Ministers supporting global education in the member States of the Council of Europe.

99. In parallel to the Lisbon Forum, a fair with stands was set up for human rights organizations, educators and practitioners to display their work in the field of human rights education and to have an exchange of experiences on tools, methods and projects.

Engaging parliaments in the Alliance's agenda

100. During the period covered by this report, the Alliance engaged actively with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on mainstreaming the issues of cross-cultural dialogue and understanding into the national policies of the member countries of the Group of Friends. Bringing the Alliance's agenda into the parliaments and generating debate among legislators on how to institutionalize policies aiming to build trust and understanding across countries and communities, thereby countering the forces of polarization and extremism, is the ultimate objective of the Alliance.

101. The inaugural event for the cooperation with IPU was the parliamentarian conference that was held at the pre-session event of the Rio de Janeiro Forum. On that occasion, IPU presented its report and a resolution on the role of parliaments in ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world.

Soliya (Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund)

102. In October 2009, the Alliance of Civilizations Media Fund merged with Soliya (www.soliya.net), an international non-profit organization that is using new media technologies to create and mobilize a global community of youth to promote intercultural understanding in diverse societies. Using customized videoconferencing technologies, the Soliya Connect Programme engages young people in sustained cross-cultural dialogue through accredited university courses. To date, Soliya has partnered with over 80 universities in 25 countries and reached almost 3,000 young people. Last semester, the Connect Programme expanded to 14 new universities, including Al-Azhar University, Yale University, The American University of Afghanistan and the University of Florence. Alumni of the Connect Programme have established Terana (www.terana.com), a diverse community of young people who are using new media to capture and share diverse perspectives and foster intercultural understanding in their communities. As part of the Terana pilot programme, a small group of outstanding Terana fellows were selected to participate in the Rio de Janeiro Forum. Prior to the Forum, the fellows recorded short video interviews with people in their communities, discussing key issues on the Forum agenda. At the event, they shared these videos as part of interactive presentations preceding panel discussions on the relevant topics.

V. Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations

103. At the invitation of the Government of Brazil, the Third Alliance of Civilizations Forum was held from 27 to 29 May 2010 in Rio de Janeiro. It brought together a powerful network of several thousand political and corporate leaders, mayors, civil society activists, youth, journalists, foundations, international organizations and religious leaders. Several Heads of Government and more than 30 ministers took part in the event, sharing ideas and insights about improving understanding and respect among diverse cultures.

104. Through plenaries, thematic sessions and workshops, participants explored issues such as the need to create inclusive societies founded on respect for human rights and diversity; civil society initiatives aimed at combating intolerance and prejudice; tools for children and young people to help them navigate an increasingly complex and multicultural world; the influence of globalization on people's sense of belonging and identity; the empowerment of women through education; the role of religious leaders in promoting peace and development and the impact of media on perceptions of other cultures.

105. The Rio de Janeiro Forum was preceded by a pre-session event combining a full range of activities organized by the Alliance's partners that attracted lots of participants and generated intense interest. Among the various working sessions, two deserve special mention: the meeting convened by IPU with a delegation of approximately 50 legislators from more than 20 countries who debated the role of parliaments in promoting cultural dialogue and understanding, as well as their participation in national plans and regional strategies; and the round table on "Addressing Islamophobia: building on unused opportunities for mutual respect and inclusion" (co-organized by the Alliance of Civilizations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Council of Europe and the British Council), which generated polarized opinions and sparked some controversy.

106. The Rio de Janeiro Forum also showcased some of the most cutting edge initiatives using imagination and creativity to build cooperation among cultures. Through the Marketplace of Ideas, it featured 10 ambitious and promising grass-roots projects, selected from hundreds of applicants around the world. These initiatives, which have the potential to be scaled up and replicated in other diverse communities, were presented to Heads of State, heads of foundations and private sector executives, creating unique opportunities for profile-raising and broader expansion.

107. The Rio de Janeiro Forum featured a very strong youth component, with a Cultural Youth Walk in the Saara neighbourhood of Rio de Janeiro, involving 140 youth participants from 60 countries. This was followed by a Youth Event, during which participants explored issues such as the role of the media in shaping perceptions and challenging stereotypes, history as a tool for cooperation, human rights as a tool for solving conflicts and living together in urban societies. These discussions matched the Forum topics, allowing young people to develop relevant recommendations that were presented to political leaders and other Forum participants during the closing plenary.

108. The Forum led to several significant outcomes and announcements, including: the inauguration of the first two Dialogue Cafés in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro; the negotiation, conclusion or renewal of agreements with international bodies, including UNESCO, the Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, OIC, ILO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the World Bank; the second phase of the Fellowships Programme (due to start in November 2010); the launch of the Online Community on Migration and Integration (in partnership with the International Organization for Migration); the creation of the United Nations University International Institute for the Alliance of Civilizations (to be based in Barcelona, Spain); and the launch of the third edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund, among many other initiatives.

109. While the assessment process has not yet been completed and some of the conclusions still need to be drawn, the Rio de Janeiro Forum powerfully contributed to the emergence of a more universal Alliance of Civilizations. It undeniably further established the Alliance as the premier global platform, anchored in the United Nations, for dealing with good governance of cultural diversity.

VI. Outreach

110. The Alliance has benefited from extensive outreach efforts from numerous projects carried out in the past year. Various partnerships have been set up within the United Nations system, with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia and media professionals. Efforts have also been made to give the general public and Alliance partners a good sense of the activities and objectives, in particular through communications materials featuring projects and people's testimonials of their involvement with the Alliance.

111. The High Representative and members of the secretariat have also provided briefings to various constituencies, both about the Alliance generally and on specific projects. The High Representative has written a number of articles and given numerous speeches about the Alliance all around the world.

112. The Migration Integration Programme contributed and/or co-organized a series of round tables and seminars, such as the round table on inter-ethnic cities in September 2009 in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Italy and Canada and the International Organization for Migration, a seminar with the International Organization for Migration and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research on social inclusion and presentations of the Online Community and the Migration Programme in various settings. A summary report of the inter-ethnic cities round table was published and widely distributed on the occasion of the Forum in Rio de Janeiro.

113. As part of a strategic effort to bring both the United Nations and the Alliance to a larger community outside the traditional metropolitan areas in the United States, the Education Programme has given briefings on the Alliance of Civilizations to groups in Cleveland, Florida and Connecticut. In Atlanta, as a result of collaboration between the Istanbul Center and other local, national and international partners, the Alliance became known to thousands of high-school students who entered a State-wide art and essay competition on themes related to the Alliance. Under the Education Programme briefings were given on the Alliance and specific projects in Barcelona, Spain, and Melbourne, Australia.

114. The media literacy education programmes and initiatives were featured in several international conferences in China, Spain, Germany, Sweden and Chile. In addition, PLURAL+ 2009 was presented at festivals around the world, including in France and India. Brazil's Canal Futura and Italy's RAI Educational have subtitled the PLURAL+ videos and are broadcasting them through their networks. United Nations Television and Video produced a segment on PLURAL+ for the *UN in Action* series, and the programme has been broadcast around the world on United Nations Television and Video affiliated networks.

115. The website also plays an important role in raising the Alliance's visibility. The Alliance website traffic has increased with over 5,000 visitors per month and 14,000 hits. Membership on the Alliance's Facebook page has also increased to 1,700 and it has over 350 followers on Twitter. The Alliance profile will be raised even further in the coming months through the creation of a new website by the end of 2010. This new website will provide the Alliance with a new opportunity to fully feature its work and its range of activities.

116. Furthermore, the Rio de Janeiro Forum contributed significantly to developing the Alliance's profile and strengthening awareness of our activities to the general public. For the first time, a website dedicated specifically to the Forum was developed and it has generated a considerable amount of attention, with 17,282 page views during the Forum week. The website enabled the Alliance secretariat to upload news in real time, showcase the work of the Alliance and use social media such as Twitter for the Forum among civil society networks. Press coverage has been very positive and generated even stronger media coverage than in Istanbul, with over 1,000 articles and news dispatches published in various languages, including reports, news stories, interviews and opinion pieces. Partnerships with media organizations, in particular Euronews, TV5 Monde and United Nations Television and Video news broadcasts used by media outlets worldwide generated extensive media coverage.

VII. Governance: secretariat and Trust Fund

117. In spite of the rapid expansion at several levels, including of the Alliance's membership, the number of Alliance partners, the diversity of the situations and experiences brought to its attention and the scale of initiatives taken, the resources at the disposal of the Alliance of Civilizations continued to be very low and towards the end of the period under review there were obvious concerns about the sustainability of the process. Over the past year, the Alliance of Civilizations Trust Fund grew more modestly than ever before and at a pace that is now seriously undermining the sustainability of the process.

118. With an overall volume of annual expenditure close to $5.2 million (of which approximately $3 million was for the projected core budget and $2.2 million for fully funded projects, mainly the Rapid Response Media Mechanism, which is funded exclusively by the United Kingdom), so far new contributions to the Trust Fund in 2010 did not exceed $2.3 million.

119. This means that by the third quarter of 2010 approximately $1.7 million must be raised, of which approximately $1.3 million is needed to secure the core budget in 2010. Although a full picture would need to take into consideration donations in kind and private contributions, which are on the rise, cash-flow shortages are a frequent problem and the impossibility to enter into commitments of any duration undermines efficiency. Somehow arrangements will have to be made in order to secure at an early stage in each year a level of contribution to the Trust Fund — approximately 3 million — allowing for core operations and providing a foundation for additional fund-raising efforts, for large-scale projects, campaigns and grants. Failing such an arrangement, the future is not assured.

120. On the organizational side, the overall increase and further diversification of the workload of the secretariat means that more staff must be taken on. The practice of seconding officials, inaugurated by Switzerland, should be further developed by countries and organizations, in a way that also contributes to the overall balance in the secretariat. Furthermore, the transfer or delegation of certain tasks to more appropriate and skilled members and partners of the Alliance might prove to be a good solution to increase the capacity of the secretariat and thus also contribute to a more coordinated and effective cooperation within the international system.

VIII. Conclusion

121. The period under review started with the accession to the Group of Friends of Saudi Arabia and ended almost when the United States of America joined, in a trend that carried with it many other accessions and partnerships. The Alliance affirmed its universal dimension. At the same time, it reinforced its global scope and preserved its capacity and will to continue to address tensions often connected with the dialogue between the so-called Western and Muslim societies at all levels.

122. The Alliance of Civilizations continued to rely upon countries to turn its global scope into local goals. New national action plans and regional coordinated efforts under the regional strategies will be needed, at the same steady pace, building on the lessons learned in those processes. The Alliance is also increasingly realizing the impressive transformative power of its many civil society partners in terms of connecting people and building trust: there is no better ownership of the Alliance's

goals. Its role as a platform and global matchmaker is bound to increase further, informally bringing together policymakers and grass-roots innovators, including faith-based movements.

123. Difficulties, of course, abound as the Alliance represents a peacemaking process, a way of living together. But peace is never made; it is always in the making. Furthermore, it combines an ever-increasing diversity of interests and expectations in spite of being firmly anchored in the common framework of principles and values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments.

124. During the period under review, the broad dialogue-based and consensus-building approach upon which the Alliance relies showed some of its limits. Strengthening the community of the Group of Friends and avoiding internal polarizations and the usual blocs within it continue to be a main concern and a priority for the High Representative.

125. Furthermore, as a loose and flexible initiative, the Alliance relies mainly on the High Representative and the debates within the Group of Friends. Although so far it has proved rather effective, with growing membership and possible added contradictory demands, there is an emerging need for some reflection on how to improve decision-making procedures without turning the Alliance into another bureaucracy. Small improvements — such as, for instance, the introduction of a more formal validation by the Group of Friends of the implementation plans — may consolidate the sense of greater ownership of the Alliance by its members.

126. Indeed, while political support remains a key condition of the Alliance, sustainability of the initiative has also to be reinforced in order to ensure the credibility of this United Nations platform. While keeping the voluntary Trust Fund as the main basis, a voluntary replenishment mechanism that will ensure sustainable and predictable support to the Alliance may be an option to be explored.

127. As it moves on, the Alliance will broaden its knowledge base and its capacity to turn to the right partners to identify the most appropriate actions. The most challenging phase is now. Now is the time to close ranks.

128. The hope is that the overall process will contribute to more inclusive approaches, less confrontational claims, less definitive value judgements, a recognition that difficult situations often have many facets and can seldom be solved through "us and them" approaches.

Annex

Alliance of Civilizations: addendum to the second implementation plan (2009-2011)*

July 2010

I. Introduction

Following the Third Alliance of Civilizations Forum held in Rio de Janeiro from 27 to 29 May 2010, a number of decisions and initiatives have emerged that will help consolidate the work of the Alliance and further define its main strategic objectives. Furthermore, during the period from June 2009 to the time of writing, the Alliance was confronted with a number of new challenges that have to be addressed.

Taking stock of the updated framework, the present addendum outlines additional priority areas that complement the Alliance's second implementation plan and will help shape the work of the Alliance in the remaining period it covers (August 2010-July 2011).

This addendum represents the midterm review of the Alliance's programme of action, as announced in paragraph 12 of the introductory remarks to the second implementation plan (2007-2009) presented in June 2009.

II. Addendum to part II: main objectives, goals and targets

Among the six priorities identified, efforts will be scaled up in particular regarding priority 4, which focuses on organizational and financial issues in order to make the Alliance a sustainable initiative; and priority 5 on the development of the Alliance's media outreach by implementing a more effective communications strategy both at the global and local levels.

Moreover, priority 1 on national plans and regional strategies for intercultural dialogue and cooperation will continue to be considered the main building block of the Alliance and one that allows it to deliver results on the ground.

Priority 6 aimed at reinforcing the role of the Alliance as a soft power tool for preventive diplomacy within a global partnership for peace will also be at the core of the High Representative's action in 2010-2011.

All these priority actions should aim to achieve the general and the specific goals of the Alliance to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism, in particular in regions more in need.

During this period, the Alliance should scale up efforts to contribute to ongoing efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, including discrimination against persons based on their religion or belief.

* Available from www.unaoc.org.

III. Addendum to part III: political priorities of the High Representative

While overseeing the implementation of the Alliance's second implementation plan for the remaining period (2010-2011), the High Representative will intensify his actions aimed at reinforcing the political support for the Alliance, establishing contacts and furthering dialogue with key partners who can use their influence to achieve progress in the Alliance's goals.

Further key points will be identification of the strategic outlook and goals of the 2011 Forum in Qatar, preparation and follow-up to the future regional strategy for Latin America and the action plans implementing both the Regional Strategy for South-East Europe and for the Mediterranean. Possible developments regarding any other new regional strategies will also be considered.

Strengthening the contribution of the Alliance to bridge divides within and among societies as a typical soft power contribution to peacemaking processes will also receive the High Representative's special attention, especially in the Middle East region.

IV. Addendum to part IV: strengthening the Alliance of Civilizations network

A. Group of Friends

The consolidation of the Group of Friends as a community and a platform for global conversations and multiple interactions will be a key priority. Moreover, the decision-making process will be strengthened through this broad dialogue-based and consensus-building approach.

B. Community of focal points

The role of focal points as national coordinators for the Alliance in order to ensure a better match between national or regional actions, on the one hand, and the Alliance of Civilizations programmes and projects, on the other, will be enhanced.

C. Alliance of Civilizations global network

The challenge ahead is to increase these networks' participation in developing cooperation and partnerships with all stakeholders, including Governments, and to engage them in concrete projects, to which they can bring complementary perspectives and expertise.

D. Alliance of Civilizations ambassadors

The role of the network of Alliance ambassadors still needs to be further consolidated. Consideration should also be given to enlarging the network to a few additional members, in order to further improve the global outreach of the Alliance.

E. Advisory Group to the High Representative

Still to be created, this Advisory Group is to be reframed. Without prejudice to section A above, one possibility to be explored is to match it with the development

of a voluntary replenishment mechanism twinned with the Trust Fund that will ensure sustainable and predictable support for the Alliance.

V. Addendum to part V: main activities — achieving results

A. National plans and regional strategies

National plans

Collaboration with international and regional organizations, members of the Group of Friends, and academic and research institutions will be stimulated with a view to designing appropriate conceptual tools to deal with cultural diversity issues, identifying gaps and stumbling blocks, finding solutions to common issues, and helping to create policies to support the promotion and enhancement of cultural diversity, to develop intercultural dialogue and strengthen programmes focused on culturally sensitive curricula in formal and non-formal education for all, as well as on human rights, media literacy and education about religions and beliefs.

During the remaining period covered by the second implementation plan, special attention will be paid to all these aspects in order to facilitate this process, monitor it and assess outcomes and progress.

Regional strategies

The implementation of the action plan for the Regional Strategy for South-East Europe is a top priority, as is the adoption of the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean and the finalization of its action plan.

Regarding the regional strategy for Latin America, the Alliance will work in close collaboration with the Ibero-American Secretariat. Preparatory work will start soon. A first preparatory meeting is scheduled to take place in November 2010.

The main components of this regional strategy should focus on bridging divides among different communities in the region.

A possible regional strategy for Central Asia will also be explored in collaboration with international organizations members of the Alliance, namely OSCE.

In view of the Forum that will take place in Qatar in 2011, the High Representative will encourage the Gulf States to develop a regional strategy for the region based on common activities.

B. Fulfilling commitments: the Alliance's projects

In the next year, the Alliance will continue to expand and improve its ongoing projects and will implement the new initiatives announced at the Rio Forum, according to the report on the Forum to be presented in September 2010.

Depending on circumstances, opportunities and resources available, the Alliance may take on additional projects and initiatives with various coalitions of partners in its four areas of action. Moreover, the framework for action created by the adoption of regional strategies will be fully used to give a regional footing to the various ongoing programmes.

In the media field, the Rapid Response Media Mechanism should continue to undergo its expansion. Training sessions for journalists might be intensified.

In the field of education, new actions related to education about religions and beliefs might be launched and developed. If the first AOC Summer School is successful, it should be turned into an annual event.

The Youth Strategy should be fully implemented, building on the forthcoming global convention of the Youth Movement, to be held in Baku in October 2010, and a new edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund should be organized. The International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding is a unique opportunity to mainstream the Alliance's objectives.

In the migration field of action, the development of the Online Community on Migration and Integration is a priority. Moreover in this area, city diplomacy cooperation is to be enhanced during the period ahead.

Regarding the cross-cutting initiatives, the Fellowship Programme, the Dialogue Café network and the Marketplace of Ideas are top priorities for the Alliance.

With respect to the cluster of initiatives called "Restore trust, rebuild bridges", relevant ongoing projects will be transferred into the action plan of the Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean.

C. Implementing memorandums of understanding

Particular attention will be given to the implementation of recently signed memorandums of understanding and plans of action, the finalization of the preparation of memorandums of understanding with the World Bank, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the African Union, as well as the possible renewal of other existing cooperation agreements and tools.

VI. Addendum to part VI: Alliance of Civilizations secretariat and Trust Fund

A. Secretariat

Further efforts will be made to develop creative formulas to enhance the Alliance's capacity to deliver and its presence in key regions of the world on the basis of possible delegation of tasks to partners and sharing of human resources.

B. Voluntary Trust Fund

Concerted efforts will be made to enlarge the group of donors to foundations, the private sector and individuals and to create a voluntary replenishment mechanism that will ensure sustainable and predictable support for the Alliance.

VII. Addendum to part VII: developing the Alliance's communications strategy

Building on earlier efforts, further development of the Alliance's communications strategy is to be prioritized at the local and global levels.